

PART ONE

Army Physical Readiness Training Philosophy

[Part One introduction paragraph(s)]

Chapter 1

The Army's Approach To Physical Readiness Training (PRT)

“Military leaders have always recognized that the effectiveness of fighting men depends to a large degree upon their physical condition. War places a great premium upon the strength, stamina, agility, and coordination of the soldier because victory and his life are so often dependent upon them. To march long distances with full pack, weapons, and ammunition through rugged country and to fight effectively upon arriving at the area of combat; to drive fast-moving tanks and motor vehicles over rough terrain; to make assaults and to run and crawl for long distances, to jump into and out of foxholes, craters, and trenches, and over obstacles; to lift and carry heavy objects; to keep going for many hours without sleep or rest – all these activities of warfare and many others require superbly conditioned troops.”

FM 21-20, Physical Training (January 1946)

SECTION I - PRINCIPLES OF ARMY TRAINING

1-1. Army training prepares soldiers, leaders and units to fight in the full spectrum of operations. FM 21-20, Army Physical Readiness Training, is the Army's physical readiness training doctrine. Its purpose is to prepare soldiers for the physical challenges inherent in current and future operational environments. The Army's standardized approach to PRT is directly linked to the Army's principles of training described in FM 25-101, Training the Force, Battle-Focused Training. Leaders must know and understand how the nine principles of Army training relate to PRT in order to enhance war-fighting capabilities.

TRAIN AS COMBINED ARMS AND SERVICES TEAM

1-2. War is uncompromising and unforgiving for soldiers. The rigors of battle demand mental and physical toughness and teamwork. A high level of physical readiness is required, whether the soldier occupies a combat, combat support or combat service support role. It is vital that PRT is consistent across all branches and Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). *Train as a combined arms and service team.*

TRAIN AS YOU FIGHT

1-3. All Army training is based on this principle. Therefore, the primary focus of military PRT must go far beyond preparation for the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). The physical readiness capabilities of soldiers are improved through military PRT. Experience has demonstrated that few soldiers enter the Army physically fit for the arduous duties ahead of them. The softening influences of our modern society make the challenge of toughening soldiers more important than ever. If soldiers are to achieve the desired standard of physical readiness, a well-conceived plan of mass military PRT must be an integral part of every unit training program. Army PRT must incorporate those types of training activities that directly support war-fighting tasks. This is why PRT activities must include such fundamental skills as climbing, crawling and running that contribute to success in the more complex skills of obstacle negotiation, combatives and military movement. *Train as you fight.*

USE APPROPRIATE DOCTRINE

1-4. Army manuals have undergone cycles of change after major periods of armed conflict, reflecting the lessons learned from the soldiers who endured the rigors of combat. Since doctrine is the condensed expression of the Army's approach to war fighting, the tactics, techniques, procedures, organizations, support structures, equipment and training must all derive from it. To be useful, doctrine must be uniformly known, understood, replicable and accepted. This manual is descriptive in nature, rooted in time-tested theories and principles, yet forward-looking and adaptable to unit missions and individual capabilities. It will guide leaders in the progressive conditioning of all soldiers in the areas of strength, endurance and mobility. The manual will provide a variety of PRT activities that enhance military skills essential to effective combat and duty performance. The precise description of PRT activities will assist leaders in the planning and execution of programs that ensure individual soldiers and units are prepared for their wartime mission. *Use appropriate doctrine.*

USE PERFORMANCE-ORIENTED TRAINING

1-5. Soldiers and units must be proficient in the basic skills required to perform their missions during duty and wartime conditions. Therefore, Army PRT must be performance based, incorporating activities that prepare units to accomplish physically challenging tasks. The tasks, conditions and standards of PRT are derived from the mission analysis of Mission Training Plan (MTP) Tasks. The Army PRT model is a phased approach to physical conditioning. Every soldier will pass through toughening and conditioning phases that develop strength, endurance and mobility, the critical components of Army PRT. As soldier performance levels increase, conditions under which tasks are performed become more demanding while standards remain constant. Soldiers and leaders must execute the planned training, assess performance, and retrain until Army standards are met under conditions that attempt to replicate wartime conditions. The end state requires leaders to integrate the relative physical performance capabilities of every soldier in order to generate superior combat power. Critical to the

accomplishment of this end state is the ability to train soldiers for maximum physical performance. *Use performance-oriented training.*

TRAIN TO CHALLENGE

1-6. Army PRT should be tough, realistic and physically challenging, yet safe in its execution. The objective is to develop soldiers' physical capability to perform their duty assignments or combat roles. The phased approach to PRT, conducted with rational progression, provides challenging training with reduced risk of injury. *Train to challenge.*

TRAIN TO SUSTAIN PROFICIENCY

1-7. The Army prides itself on conducting all training to standard. When soldiers and units have trained to standard, proficiency is maintained through sustainment training. PRT must sustain the soldier's level of fitness while enhancing fundamental skills and progressing toward proficiency in specialized war fighting or mission-related tasks. *Train to sustain proficiency.*

TRAIN USING MULTIECHELON TECHNIQUES

1-8. Multiechelon training is the simultaneous training of more than one echelon on different tasks. Prior to the conduct of multiechelon training, commanders must assess their unit's proficiency to determine the appropriate tasks to be trained. The same is true in the development of Army PRT. The Commander plans PRT based on the assessed level of physical readiness of his soldiers. New soldiers entering the unit from IET may still require training as specified in the toughening phase. Seasoned soldiers will be trained as specified in the conditioning phase. Soldiers on medical profile, enrolled in the Army Weight Control Program or APFT failures will be trained as specified in the reconditioning program. Generally, these soldiers re-enter PRT in the toughening phase. *Train using multiechelon techniques.*

TRAIN TO MAINTAIN

1-9. Maintenance of a sound PRT regimen enhances both military performance and promotes good health. Good posture, proper nutrition and adequate rest combined with regular PRT will ensure increased physical performance while positively impacting on health and wellness. *Train to maintain.*

MAKE COMMANDERS THE PRIMARY TRAINERS

1-10. As with all Army training, PRT is the commander's program. The leaders in the chain of command are responsible for the training and performance of their soldiers and units. They are the primary training managers and trainers for their organization. Leaders must emphasize the value of PRT by clearly explaining the objectives and benefits of their program and ensuring that the time allotted for military PRT is used effectively. *Make commanders the primary trainers.*

SECTION II - SUMMARY

1-11. This manual will make available to all soldiers the doctrine of Army Physical Readiness Training. It is the product of our history, forged out of the great battles from the past. Its doctrinal concepts also reflect emerging trends in current physical culture. This will impact the Army in a manner of importance towards the continuation of our national strength. The purpose of PRT is not merely to make our soldiers look fit, but actually to make them physically ready. The mind inevitably shapes itself with the body. Soldiers are renewed by wholesome physical exertion imbued with a handsome grace born of correct carriage and skillful movement. The moral attributes associated with PRT are apparent when we see soldiers standing proud, demonstrating the discipline and courage of our profession.

“Physical Readiness Training should wake soldiers up mentally, fill soldiers with enthusiasm, build soldiers up physically, and discipline them.”

Koehler's West Point Manual of Disciplinary Physical Training (1919)